

The Etiquette of Studying Hadīth

Hadrat Maulānā Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib

Translated by

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EVALUATION (1)

**Hadrat Aqdas Maulānā Arshad Madanī Sāhib
dāmat barakātuhum**

Ustādh Hadīth, Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰی سَیِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِیْنَ، وَعَلٰی اِلٰهِ

وَاَصْحَابِهِ اَجْمَعِیْنَ

The science of Hadīth is the most honourable of all sciences. It is an important pillar of *Dīn*. Its theme centres around the being and attributes of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Hadīth is defined as the words, actions and tacit approvals of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. This means that the science of Hadīth is connected to the pure life of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam from beginning to end. Without this science, neither is the *tafsīr* (exegesis) of the Qur’ān possible, nor the codification of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). This is why the ‘*ulamā*’ of every era considered service to this science and attachment to it to be a means of success for them in both worlds. From the very early centuries of Islam, certain principles and rules were laid down for the preservation of Hadīth, and through which the rank of each Hadīth could be delineated, and the status of the rules of the Sharī’ah which were derived from it could be established.

Allāh *ta’ālā* willed the termination of the chain of prophet-hood with our master, Hadrat Muhammad sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, and no Prophet was to come after him until the day of Resurrection. This is

why the preservation of this science of Hadīth was undertaken in a very distinguished manner. We will not be exaggerating in the least if we said that no other nation could preserve the words, actions and tacit approvals of the Prophet which was commissioned to it. Allāh *ta'ālā* enabled this important task to be undertaken and fulfilled only by the followers of Muḥammad *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* so that this *Dīn* may be preserved until the day of Resurrection.

From the above explanation, the importance of the science of Hadīth and its need for the continued existence of this final *Dīn* can be clearly gauged. It is therefore most important for the students who are studying this science, and who are also the inheritors of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, to be fully aware of the etiquette of the science of Hadīth, and to observe its etiquette. As the saying goes: “The one who has manners and etiquette is most fortunate. The one who is deprived of this is most unfortunate.”

It has also been witnessed that the more devoted and sincere a person is with this science, and the more respect he shows to it, the stronger his spiritual bond with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.

The associates of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt *Sāhib mudda zilluhu* transcribe a lesson which he had delivered. They then published it as a short but beneficial booklet titled, *Ādāb-e-Hadīth (The Etiquette of Studying Hadīth)*. I had the opportunity of perusing through it in the course of my journey and found it most beneficial especially for students.

I make *du'ā'* to Allāh *ta'ālā* to bestow this blessed work with acceptance, and to enable the students of Hadīth to take maximum benefit from it. Āmīn.

(Hadrat Aqdas Maulānā) Arshad Madanī (Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)

Servant of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband
29 Rabī' al-Ākhir 1430 A.H.

EVALUATION (2)

**Hadrat Aqdas Maulānā Hāshim Jaugwārī Sāhib
*dāmat barakātuhum***

**Khalīfah of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Hadrat
Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Sāhib
*nawwarallāhu marqadahu***

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَكَفَى، وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِیْنَ اصْطَفٰی

I heard this entire lesson of Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Sāhib *mudda zilluhu* on the subject of etiquette. May Allāh *ta'ālā* enable us to appreciate it.

This lesson deals with etiquette. The honourable students must make it an “amulet” and do their utmost to practise on it. It is only through etiquette that a person is bestowed with knowledge. It is stated in *Akhlāq Muḥsinī*:

“The inspiration to adhere to etiquette is from Allāh *ta'ālā*. The person who does not have etiquette is really deprived of Allāh’s grace.”

It is essential to bear in mind the etiquette which he outlined irrespective of whether they are with regard to one’s teachers, the books [of Hadīth], or the Muḥaddithīn (Hadīth scholars and compilers). The students must study these etiquette attentively, and try to practise on them. If not, the wealth of knowledge will not be acquired. May Allāh *ta'ālā* engrain the desire to consider these etiquette in the hearts of one and all.

It is essential to consider all etiquette – external and internal. The Sufis state that the essence of Sufism is in etiquette.

التَّصَوُّفُ كُلُّهُ آدَابٌ

Taṣawwuf in its entirety is etiquette.

It is most essential to save one's self from being disrespectful. If not, there will be nothing but deprivation.

This booklet must be studied with due importance so that one may learn the different etiquette for each occasion and place. By practising on these, a person will be able to acquire internal and external perfection. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire me to practise on these etiquette, and the reader as well.

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَرْجِعُ وَالْمَأْبُ

(Ḥaḍrat Aqdas Maulānā) Hāshim (Ṣāhib dāmat barakātuhum)

19 Rabī' ath-Thānī 1430 A.H.

EVALUATION (3)

Hadrat Maulānā 'Atiq Ahmad Bastawī Sāhib
dāmat barakātuhum
Ustādh of Hadīth, Dār al-'Ulūm Nadwatul 'Ulamā'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَخَاتَمِ
النَّبِيِّينَ، مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

We are most grateful to Allāh *ta'ālā* for having allowed the system of free *Dīnī makātib* (primary Islamic schools), *madāris* (secondary Islamic schools) and *jāmi'āt* (higher centres of Islamic learning) to expand and broaden by the day. These have expanded from the subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) and spread to Britain, South Africa, America, Canada, etc. where very high centres of Islamic learning have been established, and where, like the Subcontinent, education to the level of *Daurah-e-Hadīth* (final year of the 'ālim course) is being imparted.

While the number of *madāris* and crowds of students are increasing by the day, it is a bitter fact that the level of education and moral training is dropping very swiftly. While there may be a rise in quantity, there is a drop in quality. However, we are grateful to Allāh *ta'ālā* that a perception of responsibilities and consciousness in this regard is still existent among the elders, administrators and teachers in these *madāris*. Wherever we happen to go, we find a concern and a passion to improve the dropping standards in the education and moral training of the students.

A major cause for the drop in the standards is an absence of purpose and objective in the students, lack of sincerity, and distance from the etiquette of seeking knowledge. There is a need to blow a new spirit of sincerity and specialization in our *madāris*. This task can only be undertaken by sincere and experienced teachers.

An important link in this golden chain is the booklet before you, *The Etiquette of Studying Hadīth*, of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*; in which he presents the internal and external etiquette of seeking Islamic sciences – especially the science of Hadīth – in a very simple and effective style. May Allāh *ta’ālā* bless Hadrat Maulānā in his life and health, and may He enable him and his associates to continue their efforts and services in the fields of education, moral training, reformation and rectification.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt *dāmat barakātuhum* is from among the elite ‘*ulamā*’ of Britain whom Allāh *ta’ālā* inspired to render various services to the *Dīn* and for the propagation of Islam, and in whose services He placed a lot of blessings. He established the Islamic Da’wah Academy in the famous British city of Leicester, where he commenced the task of training the youth, providing them with an Islamic environment, and giving them an Islamic identity. This “seed” which he planted has now appeared as a fully grown, shady and fruit-bearing tree. He then established Riyād al-‘Ulūm under the auspices of his Da’wah Academy. Riyād al-‘Ulūm (the gardens of knowledge) really seems to be Riyād as-Sāliḥīn (gardens of the righteous). I had the good fortune of visiting this *madrasah* on several occasions, and

had the opportunity of addressing the male and female students. My heart was very much delighted at observing the effulgent and spiritual atmosphere at the *madrasah* and the Academy, and have many high hopes for it. *Inshā Allāh*, Allāh *ta'ālā* will enable the graduates of this *madrasah*, and the brothers and sisters who benefited from it to carry out the responsibilities of education, moral training and propagation throughout the West (Europe and America). *Inshā Allāh*, this *madrasah* will serve as a lighthouse for the West, and a *Dīnī* and *da'watī* (religious and propagational) powerhouse.

The book under review, *The Etiquette of Studying Hadīth*, is actually a lesson which he delivered to the students of Hadīth at Madrasah Riyād al-'Ulūm before the commencement of their Hadīth studies. This address is like a shore-less ocean [in the information it contains]. *Inshā Allāh*, by studying *The Etiquette of Studying Hadīth*, the male and female students of the *Dīnī madāris* will develop a purpose, a genuine enthusiasm and spirit. By practising on these etiquette, the level of education and moral training will improve.

I make *du'ā'* to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this booklet, and to make it most beneficial to the male and female students, and to all readers.

(Hadrat Maulānā) 'Atīq Ahmad Qāsimī (*Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum*)

During his stay at Musjid Hirā, Dewsbury, Britain
18 June 2009

EVALUATION (4)

**Hadrat Maulānā Marghūb Ahmad Lājpaurī Sāhib
(A prolific writer and annotator to *Marghūb al-Fatāwā*)**

Bismihi Ta'ālā

As per the instruction which was given to me, I carefully studied this entire book in a single session. By the will of Allāh *ta'ālā* and inspiration from Him, it is a most comprehensive address. I believe that in addition to students, the noble teachers of the Dār al-'Ulūm will benefit from it.

In just a single lecture you explained such a vast treasure of the etiquette, principles and virtues to the students of Hadīth that it has made them independent of thousands of books.

It is my heartfelt supplication that Allāh *ta'ālā* makes this booklet beneficial and useful, and a source of continuous charity for you. Āmīn.

Was salām

Marghūb Ahmad Lājpaurī
Dewsbury, Britain.

THE ETIQUETTE OF STUDYING HADĪTH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَعَلَى
إِلِهِ الْأَصْفِيَاءِ، وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ: الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. إِرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَرْحَمَكُمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ!.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُهَا
قَوْلِي، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. اللَّهُمَّ
انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى
النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ
وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ
وَدُرِّيَاتِهِ.

The basis for success in knowledge is to consider etiquette

When any work is undertaken according to its principles and etiquette, there is success in it. If the principles and etiquette are not considered, there is certainly some sort of deficiency or shortcoming in the task. You wish to acquire knowledge of prophethood – there are certain principles and etiquette for

١ سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر والصلة عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، باب ما جاء في رحمة الناس،
ح (١٨٤٧)، سنن أبي داود، باب في الرحمة، ح (٤٢٩٠).

it. You will have to be fully aware of all the etiquette and adhere strictly to them so that you may be able to acquire its many benefits.

The benefits of the etiquette of Hadīth

The student who adheres to the etiquette of the science of Hadīth will acquire four benefits:

1. The help of Allāh *ta'ālā* which is a major boon when seeking knowledge.
2. Success in the acquisition of knowledge.
3. The special colour and tone of this science will become manifest on you, and the effects of it will be clearly displayed.
4. Allāh *ta'ālā* will inspire you to convey this special colour to others.

From these few preliminary words, you must have realized the immense importance of these principles and etiquette. They can be divided into internal and external etiquette.

Internal etiquette

There are three internal etiquette:

1. There must be respect for this science in the hearts. You must be fully conscious of the fact that the knowledge which you are busy acquiring has come from Allāh *ta'ālā*; He is the source of this science. It contains the words and actions of our beloved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. No other science of this world can compare with it.
2. There must be love for this science. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is our beloved, and everything associated to one's

beloved must also be beloved. The words, actions, every movement, every speech and every written word of the beloved are beloved. The Ahādīth contain the words and actions of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. So we have to love them.

3. Due importance to correcting your intention. This must be accompanied by continued renewal of your intention. Since this science is from among the sciences of the Hereafter, your objective must be solely to acquire benefits in the Hereafter. You must have the intention of obeying Allāh's laws and bringing people towards this. Acquisition of this world, wealth, position and authority should not be your objective.

Deprivation from the fragrance of Paradise

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ لَا يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلَّا لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا
مِنَ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرَفَ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.^١

The person who seeks knowledge - which is normally acquired for Allāh's pleasure – solely to make it a means of acquiring of this world will not get the fragrance of Paradise on the day of Resurrection.

The sciences related to the Qur'ān, Hadīth, fiqh and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam ought to have been studied solely for Allāh's *ta'ālā* pleasure. But the student is studying them to accumulate the possessions of this world, to get the praises of

^١ رواه أبو داؤد في العلم، ورواه أحمد في مسند أبي هريرة، ورواه ابن ماجه في السنة.

people, and to enjoy authority and position over others. In so doing, he has displayed serious ingratitude to this blessed knowledge. He ought to have studied it for Allāh's *ta'ālā* pleasure, but he is acquiring it for the sake of this despicable world. Because of this ingratitude of his, such a person will not even get the fragrance of Paradise on the day of Resurrection. This means that let alone not obtaining entry into Paradise, he will not be allowed to come near it as well.

Objectives of the science of Hadīth

My purpose of saying all this is to show that our intention has to be correct. After correcting our intention, we will have to constantly monitor it in the course of the year. It must be clear in our minds that this knowledge is connected to the Hereafter, so our objective must be solely for the Hereafter.

Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred you with the honour of studying Hadīth. No matter how much gratitude you express, it will be less. The honourable '*ulamā*' explained several objectives for the study of this science. If we bear them in mind, it will be easy for us to correct our intention. There are five objectives:

Acquiring the virtues which are for those who are occupied with Hadīth

1. The first objective is to acquire the merits and virtues of studying it as explained in the blessed Ahādīth.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu '*alayhi wa sallam* said:

نَصَرَ اللهُ إِمْرَأً سَمِعَ مَقَالَتِي فَحَفِظَهَا فَأَدَّاهَا كَمَا سَمِعَهَا!

May Allāh ta'ālā keep hale and hearty the person who heard my words, preserved them, and then conveyed them as he heard them.

This Hadīth can be translated as a du'ā' and also as a statement. If it is a du'ā', it will mean:

May Allāh ta'ālā keep hale and hearty the person who hears my words, preserves them, and then conveys them to others.

If it is taken as a statement, it will mean:

Allāh ta'ālā will keep such a person hale and hearty who hears my words, preserves them, and then conveys them to others.²

Look at what an immense virtue! Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is either informing us that Allāh ta'ālā will keep hale and hearty the person who hears his words, memorizes them, and conveys them to others; or, he is making du'ā' for such a person to remain hale and hearty. If it is a statement, it is a very great thing; and if it is a du'ā', it is just as great. What a wonderful bounty and favour it is to obtain the du'ā' of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam!

The faces of the servants of Hadīth remain luminous

This is why the faces of those who serve Hadīth remain luminous and effulgent. Some 'ulamā' say:

¹ مسند البزار، مسند عمرو بن عوف، ح (٣٤١٦).

² *Mirqāt al-Mafātīh*, vol. 1, p. 441.

مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَطْلُبُ الْحَدِيثَ إِلَّا كَانَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ نَضْرَةٌ^١

Any person who is occupied in the quest of Hadīth (studies it, teaches it) has a special freshness and effulgence on his face.

So we can now make this intention that we are studying Hadīth because the person who remains occupied in its study is kept hale, hearty, happy and effulgent by Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Those who were occupied with Hadīth will be closest to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* on the day of Resurrection

Now listen to another virtue: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَوَةً^٢

Those who send the most salutations to me shall be closest to me on the day of Resurrection.

There is very great virtue and merit in this for the Muḥaddithīn (Hadīth scholars), those occupied in the service of Hadīth, and those studying and teaching Hadīth. Ibn Hibbān *rahimahullāh* says that this Hadīth clearly states that the closest to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* on the day of Resurrection shall be those who were occupied with Hadīth. This is because there is no group which sends more salutations to Rasūlullāh

^١ أحكام القرآن لابن العربي، ج ٤، ص ١٢٨.

^٢ سنن الترمذي، باب ما جاء في فضل الصلوة على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، ح (٤٨٤).

sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.¹ They read Hadīth, they translate it, they explain it, and the audience listens to it. Whenever the name of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam is mentioned, they send salutations to him. We do not know the countless number of times they send salutations in each Hadīth lesson.

The students of Daurah Hadīth read approximately 40 000 Ahādīth in the course of one year

The students of Daurah Hadīth read approximately 40 000 Ahādīth in the course of one year. We do not know how many times the blessed name of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam is mentioned in each Hadīth. Then look at the translation of that Hadīth, its explanation and commentary, and the other Ahādīth which are brought in support of the opinions of the different juristical schools (*madhāhib*). From this, it will not be difficult to conclude that those who teach and study Hadīth make mention of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam the most. Obviously, they send the same number of salutations as well. Thus, the virtue mentioned in the above-quoted Hadīth will be enjoyed to the full by the Muḥaddithīn and those occupied in teaching and studying Hadīth.

We can make this intention as well: We are studying Hadīth because the one who is occupied in its study sends salutations in abundance; and the one who sends salutations in abundance will be close to

¹ *Mirqāt al-Mafātīh*, vol. 3, p. 9.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam on the day of Resurrection.

Your first objective should therefore be that we are studying Hadīth to acquire the virtues which are mentioned with reference to studying and teaching Hadīth.

Understanding of the Qur’ān – another objective for studying Hadīth

2. Another objective of studying Hadīth is to understand the Qur’ān and practise on it. The Qur’ān is the basis of the Sharī’ah. But it provides broad outlines, while the Hadīth explains it and provides details. Obviously, it is difficult to understand the main text without its commentary. We are therefore studying the pure Hadīth to get an understanding of the Qur’ān. And an understanding of the Qur’ān is the path to practising on it.

This is another intention which you ought to have: We are studying Hadīth so that we may get an understanding of the Qur’ān and, consequently, we will – *inshā Allāh* – also be able to practise on its teachings. We are thus studying Hadīth to understand the Qur’ān and to practise on it.

The joy of reading the words of the beloved

3. After explaining these two objectives, Hadrat Qutb al-Aqtāb Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says: Even if there was no other benefit in studying and teaching Hadīth, one benefit would have sufficed all. That is, it is the speech of our beloved. To

experience the joy of reading the words of our beloved is an objective in itself.¹

مَنْ أَحَبَّ شَيْئًا أَكْثَرَ ذِكْرَهُ

When a person loves something, he makes excessive mention of it.

It is not confined to the remembrance of the beloved, but everything which is connected to the beloved. His speech, his actions, his clothes, his writing, etc. In short, everything which has something or the other to do with the beloved. A poet says:

أَمُرُّ عَلَى الدِّيَارِ دِيَارِ لَيْلَى
أُقَبِّلُ ذَا الْجِدَارِ وَذَا الْجِدَارِ
وَمَا حُبُّ الدِّيَارِ شَغَفَنَ قَلْبِي
وَلَكِنِ حُبُّ مَنْ سَكَنَ الدِّيَارِ

When I pass by the district where Laylā lives, I kiss this wall and I kiss that wall. Love for this district has not occupied my heart, rather the love of the one who lives in this district.

Hadhrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* says that if there was no other purpose for studying Hadīth, this one would suffice, i.e. it is the speech of our beloved Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Since we

¹ *Taqrīr Bukhārī Sharīf*, vol. 1, p. 40.

^۲ مرقاة المفاتيح: ج ۹، ص ۲۱۲.

have love for him, we have love for his speech as well. This is why we are studying Hadīth.

Developing the eminence of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum

4. The Muḥaddithīn state another objective in studying Hadīth, viz. the person who is occupied with it develops the eminence of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum met Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, observed his actions, and became Sahābah. The person who is teaching and studying Hadīth is constantly reading and studying the way of life of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. He is observing how Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam used to stand up and move around just as the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum had observed him. The same applies to his manner of sitting, manner of going into rukū’ (the bowing posture in salāh), manner of prostrating, social life, dealings, his luminous face, his blessed character, his excellent mannerisms and so on.

Those who are occupied in the study and teaching of Hadīth are constantly observing every action of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam: how he used to get up, how he used to sit, how he used to sleep, how he used to eat, how he used to wear his clothes, etc. Just as the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum became Sahābah by observing his way of life, the person occupied with Hadīth is constantly reading about his way of life. In this way, the latter develops the eminence of the Sahābah and is likened to them to a certain extent.

أَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ هُمْ أَهْلُ النَّبِيِّ وَإِنْ

لَمْ يَصْحَبُوا نَفْسَهُ أَنْفَاسُهُ صَحِبُوا

Those occupied with Hadīth are the people of Rasūlullāh. Although they were not in his company, they are in the company of his way of life.

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak *rahimahullāh* was asked: “You study and read in solitude, don’t you get bored?! Don’t you become weary?” He replied: “How can I get bored and tired when I am in the company of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum and the Tābi‘ūn!”¹

What he meant was that the books which he studies in solitude contain information about Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum and the Tābi‘ūn. It is as though he is with them. Thus, those who are studying Hadīth are – in a way – in the company of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

A very important objective

5. While explaining the objective of the science of Hadīth, the author of Miftāh as-Sa‘ādah writes:

التَّحْيِي بِالْأَدَابِ التَّبَوِّيَّةِ وَالتَّخَلِّي عَمَّا يَكْرَهُهُ وَيَنْهَى عَنْهُ

Adorning one’s self with the mannerisms of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and safeguarding one’s self from what he dislikes and forbids.

¹ *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*, vol. 2, p. 228.

^٢ مفتاح السعادة: ج ٢، ص ١١٣.

We must try to imbibe the mannerisms, character and noble habits of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; and safeguard ourselves from the things which he disliked and forbade.

This too is a very important objective in studying Hadīth. 'Allāmah Kirmānī rahimahullāh expresses this objective as follows:

الْفُورُ بِسَعَادَةِ الدَّارَيْنِ^١

The acquisition of success in both worlds.

Allāh ta'ālā will confer success and prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter to the person who embellishes his self with the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, adorns his self with his mannerisms, and abstains from the things which he disliked or prohibited.

'Allāmah Kirmānī rahimahullāh teaches us that the objective of studying Hadīth is:

الْفُورُ بِسَعَادَةِ الدَّارَيْنِ

The acquisition of success in both worlds.

When will a student achieve success in this? When he makes himself a manifestation of:

التَّحَلِّيَ بِالْأَدَابِ النَّبَوِيَّةِ وَالتَّحَلِّيَ عَمَّا يَكْرَهُهُ وَيَنْهَى عَنْهُ^٢

Adorning one's self with the mannerisms of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and

^١ شرح الكرماني: ج ١، ص ١٢.

^٢ مفتاح السعادة: ج ٢، ص ١١٣.

safeguarding one's self from what he dislikes and forbids.

Thus, the correction of one's intention is the third of the internal etiquette. One's intention has to be correct, and its correctness has to be maintained. The heart must be cleansed of all impure motives, and embellished with pure motives. As we had said previously, because this knowledge belongs to the Hereafter and is connected to it, the objective too must be solely for benefit in the Hereafter.

External etiquette

Now let us discuss the external etiquette.

1. The first is to spend all your energies and means for the acquisition of this science.

بِقَدْرِ الْكَدِّ تُكْتَسَبُ الْمَعَالِي
وَمَنْ طَلَبَ الْعُلَى سَهَرَ اللَّيَالِي

Lofty levels and ranks are achieved according to the amount of striving and endeavouring. The one who desires loftiness will have to burn the midnight oil.

الْعِلْمُ عِزٌّ لَا ذُلَّ فِيهِ، لَا يُدْرِكُ إِلَّا بِذُلِّ لَا عِزَّ فِيهِ

Knowledge entails honour and nothing but honour. There is no humiliation in it. However, it is acquired by obliterating one's self, not by displaying one's greatness and authority.

Spend all your resources for the acquisition of this knowledge

We have to make full effort to acquire this science as it ought to be acquired. We must be able to develop total affinity with it. We will have to spend

all our energies, courage and means for its acquisition. As much time as possible will have to be spent with it. Do it with the belief that this is the best avenue to spend your time.

The following teaching of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is most beneficial in this regard:

إِحْرَاضٌ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتِعْنِ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ

You must be desirous of what will benefit you, seek Allāh's assistance, and do not display weakness.

The science of Hadīth is most beneficial. We should therefore be most desirous of it. But we should not rely only on our efforts and endeavours. Rather, we should rely on Allāh's help. At the same time, we must not sit back idle, having lost all courage to strive. We must adopt all the means for the acquisition of this blessed science.

Nothing is gained through wishful thinking

We should neither sit back having lost all courage nor should we rely on hopes and wishes. Rather, we should strive with concentration and remain attached to its acquisition. Without efforts, nothing can be achieved through mere wishful thinking.

لَوْ كَانَ هَذَا الْعِلْمُ يَحْصُلُ بِالْمُنَى

مَا كَانَ يَبْقَى فِي الْبَرِيَّةِ جَاهِلٌ

If this knowledge could be acquired by wishful thinking, there will not be a single ignorant person on earth.

¹ رواه مسلم في القدر.

This is because every person wishes he was a man of knowledge. If knowledge could have been acquired by hopes and desires, there will not be a single ignorant person on earth. Now that you have learnt that nothing can be acquired by mere wishful thinking,

فَاجْهَدْ وَلَا تَكْسَلْ وَلَا تُكْ غَافِلًا
فَنَدَامَةُ الْعُقْبَى لِمَنْ يَتَكَاسَلُ

So strive hard, do not be lazy, and do not be heedless. Regret at the end awaits the person who displays laziness.

Do not be lazy and lethargic

Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* says:

لَا يَطْلُبُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ مَنْ يَطْلُبُهُ بِالتَّمَلُّلِ وَغِنَى النَّفْسِ فَيُفْلِحُ

The one who seeks this knowledge while being lazy, lethargic and independent cannot succeed.

Students have to be very particular about safeguarding themselves against lethargy. They must study with real enthusiasm and eagerness. They must not become bored even when there is repetition in the lessons. Do not think: “This discussion which we are presently listening to in *Tirmidhī Sharīf* was done yesterday in *Abū Dā'ūd Sharīf*. And the teacher is repeating the same thing which was explained by the teacher of *Abū Dā'ūd Sharīf*. The juristical opinions which were given yesterday are being quoted today.”

My dear students! This repetition is certainly not devoid of benefit. Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred each teacher with a different ability and methodology of

teaching. Although the discussion is the same, the manner of speech is different, the explanation is different, and the arrangement of the presentation is different. Allāh *ta'ālā* is actually most kind to us for having afforded us the opportunity of understanding something which was not understood in another lesson, to be understood in the present lesson. Or it was not thoroughly understood in the previous lesson, and will now be understood in the present lesson. Furthermore, the effulgence and light of each place is different. In this way, the effulgence is being conveyed to us in different ways. Every person agrees that repetition is beneficial.

Nevertheless, we must neither become bored by repetition nor by anything else. Instead, we must study with full enthusiasm and zeal. The person who gets bored and is lethargic is deprived of knowledge.

Independence – the cause of deprivation and failure

Similarly, the person who remains independent is also deprived of knowledge. For example, he has knowledge of a particular theme from before hand which is presently being explained by the teacher. He must still listen to it attentively, as a true student, with submission, and as if he is in need of the explanation. If he tries to study independently, he will be deprived. Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* says:

لَا يَظْلُبُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ مَنْ يَظْلُبُهُ بِالتَّمَلُّلِ وَغِنَى النَّفْسِ فَيَفْلِحُ

The one who seeks this knowledge while being lazy, lethargic and independent cannot succeed.

وَلَكِنْ مَنْ طَلَبَهُ بِذِلَّةِ النَّفْسِ وَضَيْقِ الْعَيْشِ وَخُدْمَةِ الْعِلْمِ أَفْلَحَ

Yes, the one who acquires it with humility, submission, constricted living, and service to knowledge will certainly be successful.

The one who abstains from pride, chooses humility, obliterates his self, bears every type of bitterness and hardship, eats the food which he receives [without complaining], drinks whatever he gets, sits wherever he gets a place, serves his teachers, his madrasah, and his fellow students, and conveys the knowledge which he acquired to others – then according to Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh*, such a student will certainly be successful.

Knowledge is miserly

My dear students! Hadrat Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh* quotes a statement of Imām Yahyā ibn Kathīr *rahimahullāh*:

لَا يُسْتَظَاعُ الْعِلْمُ بِرَاحَةِ الْجِسْمِ^١

Knowledge cannot be acquired with bodily comforts.

You must make a firm resolution to spend all your energies, courage and means for the sake of this knowledge. You will have to spend all your time for it. You will not be vexed by any hardship along the way. If you resolve to make such sacrifices, you will get a little share of knowledge.

الْعِلْمُ لَا يُعْطِيكَ بَعْضَهُ حَتَّى تُعْطِيَهُ كُلَّكَ

Knowledge will give you only a portion of its self if you give it your full self.

^١ صحيح مسلم، كتاب المساجد ومواضع الصلوة، باب أوقات الصلوات الخمس، ح (٦١٢).

Hadrat Maulānā Yahyā Sāhib's punctuality

2. You have to be very particular about being punctual to class. Never stay absent – neither physically nor mentally. You have to be physically and mentally present in class. Let it not happen that you are present physically while your mind is wandering to different places. Consider your time to be the best thing to be spent for this knowledge.

Hadrat Maulānā Yahyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the father of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He says about himself: “I was so particular about attending my classes [as a student] that I did not miss a single Hadīth [in the course of my studies].”¹

Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* also relates his own experiences: “I had a class mate by the name of Husayn Aḥmad, and we were both studying Hadīth under my respected father *rahimahullāh*. The two of us made an agreement not to allow ourselves to miss a single Hadīth, and not to listen to any Hadīth lesson without wuḍū'. If any one of us had the need to relieve himself, he would knock the other with his knee and leave the class. In the meantime, the other [who was still seated in the class] would immediately pose a question [to the teacher]. The one who had left to relieve himself would complete the task at hand as quickly as possible, [perform wuḍū'] and return to class.”

Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* adds: “When this happened a few times, my respected father realized what we were doing. One day when my class mate

¹ *Sawānih 'Umrī*, p. 154.

left to perform wudū', I posed a question by saying: 'But 'Allāmah Ibn al-Humām *rahimahullāh* says such and such a thing in *Fath al-Qadīr*.' My father said: 'Where do we have the time to argue with you over your Ibn al-Humām? While we are waiting for your friend to return, listen to this story.' Subsequently, it became my father's habit that whenever any of us had to leave the class to perform wudū', he would relate some story or the other to us."¹

My dear students! Look at how much importance they gave to their lessons. You must always have this concern of not allowing yourself to miss a single Hadīth, and not to study it without wudū'.

Study Hadīth while in a state of wudū'

3. From the above story we learn that paying particular attention to purity is an etiquette in itself. Abū Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī al-Harawī *rahimahullāh* relates from Hadrat Qatādah *rahimahullāh* who said: "It is considered desirable for a person who is teaching or studying Hadīth to enter [the class] after having purified himself."²

Apply perfume if possible

4. Another etiquette for the student of Hadīth is to apply perfume if he is able to afford it. It is related with regard to Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* that if anyone came to ask him a ruling about a particular

¹ *Āp Betī*, vol. 1, p. 85.

² *Al-Jāmi' Li Akhlāq ar-Rāwī Wa Ādāb as-Sāmi'*, vol. 1, p. 409.

matter, he would give an answer immediately. But if the question was with regard to the science of Hadīth, he would go into his house, take a bath, wear good clothes, apply perfume, proceed to Musjid-e-Nabawī, sit in his allocated place, explain the Hadīth with full respect and decorum, and reply to the person's question.¹ Students of Hadīth must bear this in mind as well.

Study the preliminary sciences before studying Hadīth

5. One must study the preliminary and primary sciences before studying Hadīth. The student must study Arabic grammar and etymology so that he does not err in reading and translating the Arabic texts. If a student errs in these matters, he will be attributing incorrect things to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam which is a major sin. Imām Bukhārī rahimahullāh quotes a Hadīth in Kitāb al-'Ilm wherein Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

مَنْ يَقُلْ عَلَيَّ مَا لَمْ أَقُلْ فَلْيَتَّبِعُوا مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

The person who attributes to me something which I did not say must prepare his abode in the Hell-fire.

Read the text correctly

Students must be extremely cautious when reading Hadīth. They must study the preliminary sciences thoroughly because it may well be that a person who reads the text of the Hadīth incorrectly may fall

¹ *Al-Mawāhib al-Ladunyah*, p. 377.

² صحيح البخاري، كتاب العلم، باب إثم من كذب على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، ح (١٠٩).

under the warning [mentioned in the above Hadīth] because reading incorrectly is synonymous to “something which I did not say”.

The imām of language, Imām Aṣmu‘ī *rahimahullāh*, says: “The thing which I fear most about an uninformed student is his falling under the above-mentioned warning [of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi *wa sallam*].”¹

Students of the primary years must work very hard in Arabic grammar and etymology so that when they study Hadīth, they do not err when reading, translating, and explaining. Also remember, the good fortune of reading the texts is enjoyed by the person whose reading is correct. So work hard in this regard.

Attention to according respect

6. Mention the names of Allāh *ta’ālā*, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi *wa sallam*, the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum, and the erudite Imāms *rahimahumullāh* with appellations of respect. When taking the name of Allāh *ta’ālā*, add *ta’ālā, jalla jalāluhu wa ‘amma nawāluhu*, etc. When mentioning the name of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi *wa sallam*, make sure you say sallallāhu ‘alayhi *wa sallam*.

When mentioning the name of a Sahābī or Sahābiyah, add the words radiyallāhu ‘anhu or radiyallāhu ‘anhā. When taking the names of the Imāms, add the words *rahimahullāh*. It is desirable

¹ *‘Umdah al-Qārī*, vol. 2, p. 210.

to raise one's voice slightly when saying sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.¹

Do not have the slightest whispering of a scorn in your heart for any of the Imāms no matter who they are.

Mention your teacher's name with respect

7. Similarly, when you mention the name of your teacher or shaykh, use words which are suited to his position and rank. This is because he is your first link [in the chain of Hadīth transmissions]. Hadrat Masrūq rahimahullāh is a Tābi'ī who was a student of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah Siddīqah radiyallāhu 'anhā. When he used to narrate from her, he used to refer to her in the following manner:

حَدَّثَنِي الصِّدِّيقَةُ بِنْتُ الصِّدِّيقِ حَبِيبَةَ حَبِيبِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

As-Siddīqah bint as-Siddīq ('Ā'ishah, the daughter of Abū Bakr), the beloved [wife] of the beloved of Allāh ta'ālā, sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam related to me.

Look at the respect which he had for his teacher, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah Siddīqah radiyallāhu 'anhā.

When Imām Abū Muslim Khaulānī rahimahullāh relates from his teacher, 'Auf ibn Muslim rahimahullāh, he refers to him as follows:

حَدَّثَنِي الْحَبِيبُ الْأَمِينُ عَوْفُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ

My beloved trustworthy teacher, 'Auf ibn Muslim, related to me.

¹ *Al-Adhkār*, p. 117.

Respect for one's teacher

8. Respect for one's teacher is another etiquette. The centre of respect is the heart. You should therefore have a lot of respect for your teacher in your heart.

Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* says with regard to Imām Yahyā ibn Ma'īn *rahimahullāh*:

مَا رَأَيْتُ أَوْ قَرَّ لِلْمُحَدِّثِينَ مِنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ مَعِينٍ

I have not come across anyone more respectful to the Muḥaddithīn than Yahyā ibn Ma'īn.

It is very saddening to note that the respect which we ought to be according to our teachers is not found nowadays. If it is found, it is superficial. Remember! Respect to the teacher is actually respect to knowledge. If your teacher is teaching you any science of the Qur'ān and you are respectful to him, then you are being respectful to the Qur'ān. If he is teaching Hadīth, then respect to him entails respect to Hadīth.

Statements of the past scholars with regard to respect for teachers

Imām Bayhaqī *rahimahullāh* quotes a statement of Hadrat 'Umar *radīyallāhu 'anhū* wherein he says:

تَوَاضَعُوا لِمَنْ تَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُ^١

Be humble before the one from whom you are learning.

^١ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٩.

The Muhaddith, Mughīrah *rahimahullāh*, used to say:

كُنَّا نَهَابُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَهَيْبَةِ الْأَمِيرِ^١

We used to be in awe of our teacher, Ibrāhīm, just as subjects are in awe of their leader.

Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu says:

أَنَا عَبْدٌ مَنْ عَلَّمَنِي حَرْفًا، إِنْ شَاءَ بَاعَ وَإِنْ شَاءَ أَعْتَقَ^٢

I am the slave of the one who taught me a single letter. He has the right to sell me or free me.

Abū 'Ubaydah Qāsīm ibn Salām *rahimahullāh* says:

مَا دَقَقْتُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ بَابَهُ قَطُّ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ.

Whenever I went to study under any Muhaddith, I never knocked on his door (instead, I always waited for him to come out of his house). I did this because of Allāh's instruction: "Had they remained patient till you went out to them, it would have been better for them."

Respect for your teacher also demands that he be considered to be the most beneficial person for the book which he is teaching you.

Respect the instruments of knowledge

9. All the instruments of knowledge and the different means of acquiring it must also be

^١ سنن الدارمي، ح ٤٢٢.

^٢ السعياية في كشف ما في شرح الوقاية، ج ١، ص ٨.

accorded consideration and respect. Whether it is a pen, your books, your teachers, your classroom, your fellow students, or the *madrakah*.

Good conduct with one's fellow students is also among the etiquette of seeking knowledge. The lowest level of this conduct is to abstain from causing any harm or discomfort to anyone.

Practising on the Ahādīth which have been studied

10. Another important point is to practise on those Ahādīth which are related to acts of worship and actions. This is the zakāh of Hadīth. Hadrat Bishr Hāfi *rahimahullāh* used to say:

يَا أَصْحَابَ الْحَدِيثِ أَذُّوا زَكَاةَ الْحَدِيثِ

O you who are occupied with Hadīth! Pay the zakāh of Hadīth.

How should the zakāh of Hadīth be paid? He says further on:

إِعْمَلُوا مِنْ كُلِّ مِائَتِي حَدِيثٍ بِخَمْسَةِ أَحَادِيثٍ

For every two hundred Ahādīth you learn, you should practise on at least five.

We should therefore try our utmost to practise on those Ahādīth which are related to acts of worship and actions. Look at our pious elders! Hadrat Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* says:

مَا كَتَبْتُ حَدِيثًا إِلَّا وَقَدْ عَمِلْتُ بِهِ

¹ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

I did not record any such Hadīth which I did not practise on.

He says further on:

حَتَّى مَرَّ بِي أَنْ التَّيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اخْتَجَمَ وَأَعْطَى أَبَا طَيْبَةَ
دِينَارًا فَاحْتَجَمْتُ وَأَعْطَيْتُ الْحَجَّامَ دِينَارًا.^١

So much so, when I came across this Hadīth wherein it is stated that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam went for cupping and paid the cupper, Abū Taybah, one dīnār, I also went for cupping and paid the cupper one dīnār.

Ahādīth are remembered when they are practised

Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā‘īl rahimahullāh says:

كُنَّا نَسْتَعِينُ عَلَى حِفْظِ الْحَدِيثِ بِالْعَمَلِ بِهِ^٢

We used to memorize Hadīth by practising on it.

When a person practises on a Hadīth, obviously, it will remain protected with him by virtue of practising on it. For example, you learnt that when you enter a musjid, you must enter with the right foot, read Bismillāh, send salutations to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, and then read the following du‘ā’:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allāh! Open for me the doors of Your mercy.

^١ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

^٢ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

When a person who practises on these Sunnah acts is asked about the Sunnah method of entering a masjid, he will ponder over his own actions and inform the person without any hesitation. He will say: Enter with your right foot,, read Bismillāh, read durūd and salām, and say:

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allāh! Open for me the doors of Your mercy.

The one who does not practise on these Sunnah acts will forget them and fail to teach anyone if he is asked.

This is why Imām Wakī‘ *rahimahullāh* says:

إِذَا أَرَدْتَ أَنْ تَحْفَظَ الْحَدِيثَ فَاعْمَلْ بِهِ^١

If you really want to memorize a Hadīth, practise on it.

Desire to spread knowledge

11. Another important etiquette is to have a desire to spread whatever knowledge you have acquired. You must always be concerned about conveying to others whatever knowledge you have acquired. You must commence this with your fellow students. Whenever any class mate comes to you for revision or to ask you to explain something, you must explain it to him. You must then broaden this circle to include those of your locality. When residents of your locality come to ask you, you must explain to them. When an opportunity is afforded to you to

^١ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

Speak about Dīn, you must consult your teachers and act accordingly.

The tribulation of miserliness with knowledge

When a person is miserly with his knowledge, does not explain where he has to, does not help when his help is sought – then these are signs of wasting away and losing his knowledge. The knowledge of such a person will not be beneficial.

Ḥadīrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak *rahimahullāh* says:

مَنْ بَخِلَ بِالْعِلْمِ أُبْتِلِيَ بِثَلَاثٍ: إِمَّا أَنْ يَمُوتَ فَيَذْهَبَ عِلْمُهُ، أَوْ يَنْسَاهُ، أَوْ
يَتَّبِعَ سُلْطَانًا.

A person who is miserly with knowledge is tested by one of the following three: (1) he will pass away without people benefiting from his knowledge, (2) he will forget whatever knowledge he has, (3) he will become attached to a worldly-minded person (and become engrossed with worldly matters). His knowledge will not benefit him in the Hereafter.

There should neither be shyness nor haughtiness in acquiring knowledge

12. Another point to bear in mind is that a student should neither be shy nor haughty when acquiring knowledge. Sometimes, a person does not ask a question out of shyness. Sometimes he does not ask because he is too proud. At times, shyness is an obstacle to posing a question. The person thinks to himself: “If I were to ask the question, I will be disgraced before the rest of the class. Or, the teacher is busy at the moment, and he will be disturbed.”

There are occasions when pride prevents a person from asking a question. He thinks to himself: “If I were to ask a question, my status among the others will fall. They will think that I do not even understand that much!?”

Imām Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* says:

لَا يَتَعَلَّمُ الْعِلْمَ مُسْتَحْيٍ وَلَا مُسْتَكْبِرٍ

A shy person and a proud person cannot acquire knowledge.

Take advice from your teacher

13. You must constantly take advice from your teachers or any one of them, especially in matters related to your Dīnī and academic matters. This results in a lot of blessings in one’s knowledge, and a person remains on a correct direction in life. Allāh *ta’ālā* blesses such individuals with acceptance and enables them to render sterling services to Dīn.

Be particular about praiseworthy characteristics

14. You have to be very particular about having praiseworthy characteristics. Make an effort to have lofty character, the highest level of noble-mindedness, and be embellished with superior mannerisms.

Imām Abū ‘Āṣim an-Nabīl *rahimahullāh* who was a shaykh of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* says:

مَنْ طَلَبَ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ فَقَدْ طَلَبَ أَعْلَى أُمُورِ الدِّينِ، فَيَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ
خَيْرَ النَّاسِ.^١

^١ تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٤.

The one who is studying Hadīth is studying the loftiest matters of Dīn. (Since he is acquiring such a lofty thing), it is essential for him to live as the best of people.

Pen down your lessons

15. One more etiquette which I would like to add is that you must always pen down and record your lessons. By writing down what you are learning, you are safeguarding – to a certain extent – your knowledge.

مَا كُتِبَ قَرَّ وَمَا لَمْ يُكْتَبْ فَرَّ

The thing which is penned is protected. The thing which is not penned, escapes.

الْعِلْمُ صَيْدٌ وَالْكِتَابَةُ قَيْدُهُ، قَيْدُ صَيْدِكَ بِالْحَبَالِ الْوَأَثْقَةِ

Knowledge is the prey, and writing it down is the means of confining it. Bind your preys with strong and firm ropes.

When writing down a lesson, abstain from being selective. You must write down everything which the teacher says. Imām Yahyā ibn Maʿīn *rahimahullāh* says:

صَاحِبُ الْأَنْتِخَابِ يَنْدَمُ

The person who is selective in his writing will regret later.

Sometimes a certain point is very important but a student thought it to be insignificant, so he did not

١ الجامع لأخلاق الراوي، ج ٢، ص ١٨٧.

pen it. Later on when he needed this point, he could not find it. This will cause him pain and regret. Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak *rahimahullāh* writes his personal experience:

مَا انْتَخَبْتُ عَلَى عَالِمٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا نَدِمْتُ^١

Whenever I sat before a scholar and was selective in penning what he said (by writing certain points and leaving out others), I regretted it later (had I written everything, it would have helped me today).

Abū Hātim ar-Rāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

إِذَا كَتَبْتَ فَفَقِّمْشْ، وَإِذَا حَدَّثْتَ فَفَقِّمْشْ^٢

When you write, write everything down. When you speak, be selective and say the things which are verified and corroborated.

Continuity in following etiquette is essential

Dear students! These etiquette have not been mentioned merely to be heard. They are to be remembered and practised upon. They do not apply to the students of Daurah-e-Hadīth alone, but to all seekers of knowledge. In the beginning of the year, there is normally a desire to practise on the etiquette but it wanes gradually. This should not be the case. These etiquette and principles ought to be for our entire lives.

I had related this incident to you previously: Imām Sarakhsi *rahimahullāh* had diarrhoea one night. He went repeatedly to relieve himself. He had to go to

^١ الجامع لأخلاق الراوي، ج ٢، ص ١٥٦.

^٢ الجامع لأخلاق الراوي، ج ٢، ص ١٥٦.

the toilet seventy times. How weak he must have become!? Despite this, after each time, he occupied himself in studying once again. He was so desirous of knowledge that he could not leave it aside. He went to the toilet seventy times, but occupied himself in his studies each time he came out. He also performed wuḍū' seventy times in that single night! He did not touch his books without wuḍū'.¹

By virtue of this respect, Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred Imām Sarakhsī *rahimahullāh* with a position which left the world astounded. The king of the time was displeased by his words of advice, so he imprisoned him in a well. His students would assemble around the well at an appointed time, and he would teach them while he was in the depths of the well. He had no books with him, but whatever he dictated to his students from the depths of that well was later compiled into a book of thirty volumes. It is Imām Sarakhsī's *rahimahullāh* magnum opus which is known as *al-Mabsūt*. The extent of his knowledge and his powerful memory were products of his etiquette.²

My dear students! Knowledge comes with etiquette and respect. The one who is particular in this regard acquires knowledge.

مَنْ لَا أَدَبَ لَهُ، لَا عِلْمَ لَهُ

The one who has no etiquette has no knowledge.

¹ *Ma'ālim Irshādīyyah*, p. 243.

² *Ma'ālim Irshādīyyah*, p. 93.

The one who has good etiquette, has gained. The one who does not, has lost.

طُرُقُ الْعِشْقِ كُلُّهَا آدَابُ
أَدْبُوا النَّفْسَ أَيُّهَا الْأَحْبَابُ

The paths of love [for Allāh] are all confined to etiquette. O friends! Imbibe etiquette and good character within yourselves.

The path of knowledge is also the path of love through which we reach Allāh *ta'ālā* and gain proximity to our beloved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Without etiquette, these things can never be acquired.

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allāh, the Sustainer of the worlds. Salutations to our Prophet Muhammad and all his Companions.

Etiquette of studying Hadīth – a summary

Objectives of the science of Hadīth

1. Acquiring the virtues which are mentioned in Ahādīth with regard to this science.
2. Understanding the Qur'ān and practising on it.
3. It is the speech of our beloved. Enjoying the speech of the beloved is an objective in itself.
4. The one who is occupied with Hadīth develops a trait of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum.

5. To acquire success in both worlds by embellishing one's self with the mannerisms and character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* and abstaining from the things which he prohibited.

Internal etiquette of the science of Hadīth

1. Respect for this science.
2. Love for this science.
3. Giving due importance to rectifying one's intention.

External etiquette of the science of Hadīth

1. Spend all your energies and resources for the acquisition of this science.
2. Be very particular about attendance and punctuality. Do not be absent for any lesson.
3. Be particular about purity and being in a state of wudū'.
4. Apply perfume.
5. Study the preliminary sciences.
6. Take the names of Allāh *ta'ālā*, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam*, the Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum* and the Imāms *rahimahumullāh* with respect. Add the words *ta'ālā*, *jalla jalāluhu wa 'amma nawāluhu*, etc. to Allāh's name; durūd sharīf with the name of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam*, radiyallāhu *'anhu* with the names of the Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum*, and *rahimahullāh* with the names of the Tābi'ūn and Imāms. When reading durūd sharīf, raise your tone slightly.
7. Use honorific words when mentioning the name of your shaykh and teacher.

8. Have respect for your teacher from the bottom of your heart.
9. Respect the instruments and means which are used for the acquisition of knowledge.
10. Practise on the Ahādīth which you have already learnt.
11. Convey the knowledge which you have acquired thus far.
12. There must be neither shyness nor pride when acquiring knowledge.
13. Consult your teachers in all your affairs especially religious and academic matters.
14. Pay a lot of attention to praiseworthy characteristics.
15. Pen your lessons, and note everything that your teacher says. Abstain from being selective in this regard.

THE PERMISSION TO NARRATE HADĪTH

**An assembly which was conducted in Madrasah
Arabiyyah Islāmiyyah, Azaadville, South Africa**

Foreword

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* undertook a short journey to South Africa in Rabī' al-Awwal 1437 A.H./December 2015. By virtue of the request made by Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*, the founder and principle of South Africa's well-known Dīnī centre of learning – Dār al-'Ulūm Azaadville – it was decided that a talk be delivered to the students and lecturers. At the end of the talk, the students of Daurah Hadīth requested Hadrat Wālā *dāmat barakātuhum* to issue them with a permission to narrate Hadīth. Hadrat Wālā tried to defer the request but when the students and Madrasah authorities persisted – and Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* also supported this request – Hadrat Wālā acceded to it and an assembly was conducted for this purpose.

The assembly was attended by the Daurah Hadīth students, a few Madrasah lecturers and Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*. While explaining his chains of transmission (asānīd), Hadrat Wālā related some of his amusing incidents in the course of acquiring the different chains of transmission. Allāh willing, these will prove to be beneficial to the students of Hadīth. In line with the theme of the assembly, Hadrat Wālā blessed the students with his valuable words of

advice. Allāh willing, these will be most beneficial to students in general, to those who are soon to complete their studies and step into the world of serving Dīn, and also to all others who are serving Dīn in whatever way. Bearing in mind these benefits, this assembly was penned and is now presented in written form to the reader.

We pray to Allāh *ta'ālā* to make this booklet beneficial, and to reward abundantly those who saw to its printing. Āmīn.

The assembly

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ مُحَمَّدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ، وَنَعُوذُ
بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ
وَمَنْ يَضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ،
وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا كَثِيرًا.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَخَيْرُ الْأُمُورِ عَوَازِمُهَا، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ
مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

وَبِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ مِنَّا إِلَى عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ – تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى – اِرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ!.

Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad an-Nākhabī al-Yamanī

In order to continue the *tasalsul bil awwalīyyat* and acquire its blessings, the Hadīth known as *musalsal bil awwalīyyat* was first read. This sequence commences here and goes up to Hadīrat Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah *rahimahullāh*. By the grace of Allāh *ta‘ālā* I have permission to narrate the Hadīth of *musalsal bil awwalīyyat* from several seniors. The first time I heard this Hadīth was from my teacher and mentor, Hadīrat Maulānā Hāshim Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* in 1982 after the *i’tikāf* of the last ten days of Ramaḍān on the day of ‘īd al-ḥiṭr. He received permission from Hadīrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Zakariyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadīrat Maulānā Hāshim Sāhib is a student and a khalīfah of Hadīrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh*.

Another noteworthy senior is Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad an-Nākhabī al-Yamanī *rahimahullāh*. He hailed from Yemen and was a man of many Hadīth transmissions. He has passed away. Many years ago – in 1427 A.H. – I accompanied Hadīrat Maulānā ‘Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* to Jeddah where we met this Shaykh. Maulānā Yūnus Randerā Sāhib had taken us to meet him. The

^١ سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر والصلة عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، باب ما جاء في رحمة الناس، ح (١٨٤٧)، سنن أبي داؤد، باب في الرحمة، ح (٤٢٩٠).

Shaykh Sāhib was 118 years old at the time. His sanad of *musalsal bil awwalīyyat* is of a higher level. Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him with recognition and popularity towards the latter part of his life. It was his practice to go to whichever scholar he heard of and obtain permission for Hadīth from him. His level of humility can be gauged from the fact that when anyone went to him for permission for Hadīth, then he himself would seek permission from that person.

The purpose of granting permission

I am fully aware of my position and do not consider myself qualified to give Hadīth permission to anyone. This is more so when you are studying in a centre of learning under many senior 'ulamā'. However, due to your insistence and the support of Hadrat dāmat barakātuhum¹ and the administrators of the madrasah, I am granting this permission in the hope that I will – inshā Allāh – derive benefit from you. I hope you recognize your worth and value in the remaining days of your student life, choose a life of piety and repentance, and try to become genuine Allāh-fearing 'ulamā'. And after you graduate, you will serve the Dīn, especially the Qur'ān and Hadīth. When you serve the department of Hadīth – and I have become your partner by granting you permission – then I have this hope that – inshā Allāh – you will be a means for my salvation in the Hereafter.

¹ Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Is-hāq Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum, khalifah of 'Arif Billāh Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib rahimahullāh, and founder and principal of Madrasah 'Arabīyyah Islāmīyyah, Azaadville, South Africa.

It is to this end that I grant you permission for all my narrations on the condition that you will remain firm on the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, spend a life of piety and repentance with integrity and trustworthiness, give full importance to following the Sunnah, hold on firmly to the creed of the 'ulamā' of Deoband, be extremely cautious about seeking authority and wealth, and spend your time and capabilities in the service of Islam, the Qur'ān and Hadīth. May Allāh *ta'ālā* confer you with acceptance and blessings; and make you a means for continuous charity and salvation for me. Āmīn.

Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Sayf ar-Rahmān Sāhib

I would like to relate a story before reading the first Hadīth of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. A senior elder by the name of Hadrat Maulānā Sayf ar-Rahmān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* lives in Makkah Mukarramah. It is his habit to remain seated from maghrib until after 'ishā in the maṭāf area behind the Hatīm. Hadrat has showered his affections on me since a very long time. Many years ago during my student days, an accident took place and two senior teachers of Hadīth at Dār al-'Ulūm Bury – Hadrat Maulānā Ya'qūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Ibrāhīm Desai Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – passed away. There was an immediate need for teachers. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Zakariyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* sent Maulānā Sayf ar-Rahmān Sāhib. I was in the early years of my studies at the time. Nonetheless, my father had instilled in me from a very young age that nothing can be acquired without serving the pious elders. Thus, in my free time I used to go and sit in Hadrat

Maulānā's lessons. Hadrat Maulānā is the Shaykh al-Hadīth of Madrasah Saulatiyah and has received permission in the Qādirī Sufi order from Hāfiz al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Darkhwāstī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

I was saying, it is Hadrat Maulānā's practice to sit behind the Hatīm. After the 'ishā salāh, his associates would assemble around him, and other seniors who have come for 'umrah or hajj also have opportunities to meet each other here. I too make it a habit of going to Hadrat to meet him and obtain his du'ā's.

A student of Hadrat Madanī

When I went to him after 'ishā on one of those days, the gathering was larger than usual. In the centre of the assembly was an elderly man with a luminous countenance and a dignified aura. I learnt that he was a student of Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh*. His name was Hadrat Maulānā Qādī 'Abd al-Karīm Sāhib Kulāchwī *rahimahullāh*. I listened to his wise words for some time and a thought suddenly came to my mind. I thought to myself that this is an opportunity which will not come again. Here is a great scholar who is a student of Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh*, he is sitting in the Haram Sharīf, behind the Hatīm, and in an assembly of 'ulamā'. An occasion like this should not be allowed to pass and I ought to obtain permission for Hadīth from him. When he was about to get up, I took the courage and said: "Hadrat! Please be kind enough to give me permission to narrate Hadīth from you." On hearing this, he said in a stern tone: "People obtain permission to narrate Hadīth but they do not practise on Hadīth. Now choose either the first or

last Hadīth of *Bukhārī Sharīf* for which you make a firm intention of practising on, read it to me, and I will give you permission for that one Hadīth.”

Permission for just one Hadīth

Now I began thinking whether I should choose the first Hadīth or the last one. I thought to myself that it is easy to practise on the last Hadīth because it only entails repeating the dhikr:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

On the other hand, it is very difficult to practise on the first Hadīth. Correction of one’s intention and sincerity are very difficult. I had to make an immediate decision. Allāh *ta’ālā* steered me and the thought came to my heart that this is a blessed place, the assembly is blessed, there are so many ‘ulamā’ seated here, and the permission too is being granted by a student of Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh*. If I make this intention that – inshā Allāh – I will practise on the first Hadīth, then I have full hope that Allāh *ta’ālā* will create sincerity within me by virtue of this blessed place and these pious people who are present. I therefore said to him: “Inshā Allāh, I will practise on the first Hadīth.” Acting on Hadrat’s instruction, I read the first Hadīth, and he happily gave me permission for this one Hadīth.

An important objective of studying and teaching Hadīth

My reason for relating this unique incident is that it contains a very valuable lesson. The permission which is given for Hadīth and the Ahadīth which are studied during the Daurah Hadīth year must not be

merely to elevate one's status. Rather, when obtaining permission for Hadīth and studying it, one must make a firm resolution to practise on them in order to acquire Allāh's pleasure. Thereafter, one must give due importance to making du'ā' and make full efforts to practise.

My plea to you is to make full efforts to practise on the Ahādīth. We must repent and seek forgiveness over past shortcomings, consider ourselves to have erred, think that we have committed many shortcomings in obedience to Allāh *ta'ālā* and in our studies, and that as students we have not spent our time as we ought to have. This acknowledgement of shortcomings must be accompanied by repentance, and full attention must be given to living a life of piety and repentance. This is a very simple formula: T&T – taqwā and taubah. Focus on taqwā with the intention of not committing any sin. And if you err, then turn to taubah immediately. This has to be coupled with du'ā'. O Allāh! Accept me, bless me with the required capabilities, acceptance in Your court, abilities, and righteousness; and place me in the path of serving You to my last breath.

The reality of beneficial knowledge

My dear friends! You must also be very concerned about your rectification. The knowledge which is acquired together with a concern for rectification will be beneficial knowledge. This is the difference between beneficial and non-beneficial knowledge. Knowledge which is accompanied by fear of Allāh is beneficial knowledge, and the one which is acquired without His fear is non-beneficial knowledge. This fear is acquired through the process of purification

or tazkiyah. Allāh's fear is one of the internal qualities which can only be acquired when tazkiyah of the heart is done. This is why you have to give a lot of attention to tazkiyah. You must attach yourself to whichever of the mashā'ikh your heart is inclined. Bond yourself with a senior in whom you have confidence, whom you love and with whom you have an affinity. After establishing the bond with him, you must hand over your self to him. May Allāh *ta'ālā* shower many blessings on you and may He make you a means for continuous reward and salvation for me. Āmīn.

Appreciate your seniors

My dear friends! Appreciate your seniors. Here you have people like Hadrat (Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib) *dāmat barakātuhum*. Value and appreciate him, or else you will regret after his departure or after you have graduated and gone to a distant place. Now that you have the opportunity, you must value and appreciate your elders and seniors. I was blessed with the affections of our seniors. Our Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was most kind to me. I did not have a formal bond with Hadrat Hakim Akhtar Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, yet he showered his affection on me. Even in his old and weak age, he showed much love and affection to me. When he used to come to Leicester, I used to consider it my need to go daily and present myself in his service. I used to make sure that I attended his after 'aṣr assembly. At that I used to think to myself that I have set aside all my work and duties, and attended Hadrat's assembly. I used to experience a type of special happiness over the fact that I was doing what I was supposed to be doing. But now I regret that I could have benefited even more.

My dear friends! Shaytān places a veil over our eyes and deludes us into thinking that we are doing a lot to value and appreciate our seniors, and that we are deriving a lot of benefit from them, but the reality is something else. We have to come out of this misunderstanding and negligence, and face facts. We have to value our elders and derive maximum benefit from them or else we will regret immensely later on. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire us. Āmīn.

My sanad for Bukhārī

I studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* from beginning to end under my honourable teacher whose abode is now Baqī' [the graveyard of Madīnah], Hadrat Maulānā Islam al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

1. Hadrat Maulānā Islam al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* studied under the grand muftī of India, Hadrat Muftī Kifāyatullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

2. Hadrat Muftī Kifāyatullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* studied under Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh*.

3. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh* studied under Qāsim al-'Ulūm wa al-Khayrāt, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*.

4. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* studied under Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

5. Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* studied under Hadrat Shāh Muḥammad Is-ḥāq Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

6. Hadrat Shāh Muḥammad Is-ḥāq Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* studied under Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

7. Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* studied under Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

The sanad of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* going up to Hadrat Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* is printed in *al-Yānī’ al-Janī* and in the introduction of *Lāmi’ ad-Darārī*.

Hadrat Maulānā Islam al-Haq Sāhib

All the personalities in the above sanad are renowned and you know them. However, you probably do not know about my honourable teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Islam al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was a very humble and down to earth person. He liked to remain anonymous. Despite knowing him for many years, I never heard him speaking about himself even once. Even when asked, he would not divulge his conditions. Humility and anonymity were filled to the core in him. He was very lofty in both knowledge and practice. Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* said: “I hope to meet Allāh *ta’ālā* on the day of Resurrection in such a state that He will not take me to account for backbiting anyone.”¹ In like manner, those who observed Hadrat Maulānā Islam al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* from close will testify that no backbiting was ever committed in his presence. He neither engaged in backbiting nor did he listen to it.

¹ *Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’*, vol. 12, p. 439.

An enviable death

Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him with a unique death. It was in Madīnah Munawwarah, in the month of Ramaḍān, on the 27th night, on a Friday night, at the time of tahajjud, and while he was in prostration. Glory to Allāh! I personally heard his son, Maulānā Nūr al-Ḥaḡ Sāhib, relating: “When I got up for seḡrī, I saw my father in prostration.” May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless us with a death like this. Amīn.

Other transmission chains of Bukhārī Sharīf

My original sanad is what I related above. I studied the entire *Bukhārī Sharīf* from beginning to end under Ḥaḡrat Maulānā Islam al-Ḥaḡ Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, I had the honour of reading the text of most of *Bukhārī Sharīf* to him. In this sanad, there are seven levels between myself and Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. I have received permission from other seniors as well. Three of these which are via Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* are high sanads. In these, there are only four levels between myself and Shāh Walī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.¹

¹ I also have permission from other chains where the links are less. However, because there are some objections to them, I have not mentioned them here. The sanads which are in vogue via Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muḡhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and his sons are the most reliable in this present era. The great Ḥaḡdīth master, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Fīḡhris al-Faḡhāris*:

ولا أحلى عندي من هذا السند ولا أجل لكون رجاله كانوا أئمة في الدين، دعاة إلى الصراط المستقيم.

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī

We had a graduate of Jāmi‘ah Ta‘līm ad-Dīn, Dhābel in Leicester, by the name Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh*. He was very old and loved me dearly. There are many unique incidents about his love. He was not formally occupied with Hadīth. We were invited somewhere for a meal and in the course of a discussion I learnt that he studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* under Hadrat Bābā ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Amrohī *rahimahullāh* who had studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* directly from Hadrat Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. I together with the ‘ulamā’ who were present said to him: “In such a case, your sanad is of a high level, and there will be only six links between myself and Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. We therefore request you to give us permission.” Bearing in mind that Hadrat was not occupied with teaching and was very humble by nature, he began refusing and deferring the matter. I said: “Hadrat, I will read the Hadīth and I request you to listen to it.”

I read the first Hadīth of *Bukhārī Sharīf* and said: “Hadrat, I now request you to merely say: “I give permission to all of you.” All praise is due to Allāh *ta‘ālā*, we received the permission in this way. The detail of the sanad is as follows:

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh* gave permission for *Bukhārī Sharīf* to me.

According to me, there isn’t a more valuable and greater sanad than this one because its narrators were imāms in Dīn, and inviters to the straight path.

1. Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh* studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* under Hadrat Bābā ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Amrohī *rahimahullāh*.
2. He studied it under Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*.
3. He studied it under Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.
4. He studied it under Shāh Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.
5. He studied it under Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz *rahimahullāh*.
6. He studied it under Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Later when we inquired more about his sanad, we learnt that Hadrat Bābā ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had also received permission from Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. And the latter had received direct permission from Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. Based on this, there are only four links between myself and Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. This sanad is thus of a higher level. The detail of this sanad is as follows:

Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh* gave permission for *Bukhārī Sharīf* to me.

1. Hadrat Maulānā Ahmad ‘Alī Sāhib Lājpaurī *rahimahullāh* studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* under Hadrat Bābā ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Amrohī *rahimahullāh*.
2. He received permission from Hadrat Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

3. He received permission from Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

4. He received permission from Hadrat Shāh Wali Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Subsequently, by virtue of Hadrat Maulānā’s sincerity, Allāh *ta’ālā* conferred him with such popularity that countless Arab and non-Arab ‘ulamā’ received permission from him. Erudite and distinguished scholars like Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah, Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ‘Uthmānī Sāhib and Maulānā Anzar Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* are included among them. I am most thankful to Allāh *ta’ālā* over this great favour that He gave me the honour of being the first to obtain permission from Hadrat Maulānā Aḥmad ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Maulānā Naṣīr Aḥmad Khān Sāhib

I had the opportunity of going to Deoband in 2006 for the first time and the honour of meeting Hadrat Maulānā Naṣīr Aḥmad Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the Shaykh al-Hadīth of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband. I said to him: “Hadrat! I could not benefit directly from Dār al-‘Ulūm and I am most grieved over this. If Hadrat permits, I will read some portion of *Bukhārī Sharīf* before Hadrat so that – Allāh willing – I will get some of the blessings of this place.” Hadrat asked for a copy of *Bukhārī Sharīf* and asked me to read the first Hadīth. He then gave me a few pieces of advice, made a lot of du‘ā’ and conferred me with permission. Hadrat Maulānā had also received permission from Bābā ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Sāhib Amrohī *rahimahullāh*. He did not study formally under him, but received permission from him.

Hadrat Maulānā ‘Ubaydullāh Sāhib

Hadrat Muftī Muhammad Hasan Sāhib Amritsarī rahimahullāh was from among the khulafā’ of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. His son, Hadrat Maulānā ‘Ubaydullāh Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum is still alive in Lahore.¹ He received permission for Hadīth from Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh had the honour of meeting Hadrat Maulānā Faḍl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī rahimahullāh and also received permission for Hadīth from him. The same number of levels as previously are in this sanad as well. It is thus of a high level.

I have permission from other seniors as well. May Allāh *ta’ālā* enable us to benefit from the blessings of all these chains of transmission. Āmīn.

Recitation of the Hadīth

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، وَبِالسَّنَدِ الْمُتَّصِلِ مِنَّا إِلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي
الْحَدِيثِ، أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْبُخَارِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى،
وَحَشَرْنَا فِي زُمْرَتِهِ وَمُحِبِّيهِ قَالَ:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، بَابُ كَيْفَ كَانَ بَدْءُ الْوُحْيِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَقَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى
نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ.

¹ Hadrat was alive at the time of this assembly. Subsequently, he passed away on 11 March 2016 on a Friday at the time of tahajjud. May Allāh *ta’ālā* shower His mercy on him.

وَبِهِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا الْحَمِيدِيُّ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّمِيمِيُّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنَ وَقَّاصِ اللَّيْثِيِّ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ وَعَنْهُمْ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ يَقُولُ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِامْرِئٍ مَّا تَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصَيِّبُهَا، أَوْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا، فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

I request Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib to make the du'ā' today. This will bring me great joy. (Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamīd Sāhib replied): It will bring me more joy if you make the du'ā'.

Du'ā'

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ.

وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ.

اللَّهُمَّ وَفَّقْنَا لِمَا نَحِبُّ وَتَرَضَى، وَاجْعَلْ آخِرَتَنَا خَيْرًا مِنَ الْأُولَى.

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا بِزِيَّتِهِ الْإِيمَانَ، وَاجْعَلْنَا هُدَاةً مُهْتَدِينَ.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنْ خُدَّامِ دِينِكَ، وَعُشَّاقِكَ وَعُشَّاقِ حَبِيبِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ الرَّبَّانِيِّينَ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ الرَّبَّانِيِّينَ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الْعُلَمَاءِ الرَّبَّانِيِّينَ.

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي مَا أُعْطِينَنَا، وَقِنَا وَاصْرِفْ عَنَّا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ لَنَا، وَقِنَا وَاصْرِفْ عَنَّا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ لَنَا، وَقِنَا وَاصْرِفْ عَنَّا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ لَنَا.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ، مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ.

اللَّهُمَّ أَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَارْزُقْنَا اتِّبَاعَهُ، وَأَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ. اللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْنَا عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ، وَأَمِّتْنَا عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ، وَاحْشُرْنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ مَعَ الْإِيمَانِ.

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُؤَمِّنَّا مَكْرَكَ، وَلَا تُنْسِنَا ذِكْرَكَ، وَلَا تَهْتِكْ عَنَّا سِتْرَكَ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْنَا مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ.

اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفُوسَنَا تَقْوَاهَا، وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا، أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

اللَّهُمَّ اشْفِ مَرْضَانَا وَارْحَمْ مَوْتَانَا.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ حُسْنَ الْخِتَامِ، وَالْعَفْوَ عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَكَانَ.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ خَيْرَ أَعْمَالِنَا خَوَاتِيمَهَا، وَخَيْرَ أَعْمَارِنَا أَوَاخِرَهَا، وَخَيْرَ أَيَّامِنَا يَوْمَ نَلْقَاكَ فِيهِ، يَا وَلِيَّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَأَهْلِهِ ثَبِّتْنَا بِهِ حَتَّى نَلْقَاكَ.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَلِكَ إِيمَانًا لَا يَرْتَدُّ، وَنَعِيمًا لَا يَنْقُدُ، وَمُرَافَقَةً نَبِيًّا مُحَمَّدٍ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي أَعْلَى دَرَجَةِ الْجَنَّةِ جَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ.

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ.
اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَلِكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ، وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِينِ، وَأَنْ
تَغْفِرَ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمَنَا.

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ، وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. (آمين)

Remain attached to the seniors of Deoband

My dear students! Allāh *ta'ālā* has been most kind to us for having connected us to an excellent group of past scholars and seniors in the form of the 'ulamā' of Deoband. These are personalities who enjoy a most lofty position and rank in the external and internal sciences. They led an excellent life of following the Shari'ah and serving Dīn, and departed successfully from this world. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, their blessings and contributions are enjoyed throughout the world to this day. For us to be successful, we will have to tread the path of those successful personalities. We do not need any new path. Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred us with this very great favour of connecting us with personalities who were successful to the highest degree. All we have to do is remain attached to them.

There is safety in following the seniors of the past

My dear brothers! Many changes are taking place in the environment in which we live. An air of freedom is blowing from all sides. People are becoming free-loving. A Hadith states that there will come a time when people will consider good to be bad, and bad to be good; right to be wrong, and wrong to be right. It is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish right from wrong because wrong is being portrayed as right, and vice versa. In such a situation, our safety lies in following our seniors and elders who led a successful life of following the Shari'ah and departed from this world. You should therefore hold on firmly to the creed of our elders and adopt their teachings in your lives. I constantly say: "All that glitters is not gold", rather "old is gold".

The need to study the lives and statements of the seniors

You have to be reading the biography of any senior personality of the past. [For example], start reading the biography of Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh*. When you complete it, start with *Tadhkiratul Khalīl*, then *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*, and then the *Āp Betī* of Hadrat Shaykh [Muhammad Zakariyyā Kāndlawī] *rahimahullāh*. In this way, some biography or the other must be studied all the time. Similarly, study their writings, statements and lectures. Especially the statements of Hadrat Hakimul Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. You should at least read one statement of his daily. Allāh willing, you will experience spiritual progress and academic progress.

A major harm of ignorance about the lives of the seniors

If we do not read and study the lives of the pious personalities of the past, one harm of it will be that we will succumb to a superiority complex. We will fall into the misconception that there is no one like us. As long as a camel remain in a city, it considers itself to be the highest and largest animal. When it leaves the city and passes by a mountain, it realizes its real status. I always tell our students that as long as we remain within our circle, we will feel that there is no one more knowledgeable than us. This is why we will have to leave our places and go to the mountains of knowledge like Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*. When we page through their knowledge and sciences, and observe their actions, we will learn and realize our own rank and reality. When we realize this, we will be protected against pride and arrogance; we will be blessed with humility, and we will be inspired to strive in knowledge and practice.

Purification is the key to success

I would like to draw your attention to another important point. If we were to make a list of all those personalities whom Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed with acceptance and popularity and from whom Allāh *ta'ālā* took major services for Islam we will realize that they were the ones who were most concerned about their rectification and purification. Allāh *ta'ālā* caused Hadratjī Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* to render sterling services. In the beginning, he was spiritually connected to Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. When he passed away, he

pledged bay'at to Hadrat [Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad] Sahāranpūrī rahimahullāh and derived much benefit from him.¹

Later on, Allāh *ta'ālā* inspired Hadrat Shaykh rahimahullāh to do major works. Hadrat Maulānā 'Alī Miyā Nadwī Sāhib rahimahullāh did the same. And so did Hadratjī Maulānā Yūsuf Sāhib rahimahullāh. These and other seniors from whom Allāh *ta'ālā* took valuable work – whether of the early scholars or the latter day ones – all paid particular importance to spiritual purification. Allāh *ta'ālā* does not take accepted work from anyone without purification. If anyone does any work without purification, he will be doing it for himself, and for self-gratification. He will be an affirmation of this Hadīth:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُؤَيِّدُ هَذَا الدِّينَ بِالرَّجُلِ الْفَاجِرِ^٢

Allāh ta'ālā supports this religion even through a sinful person.

Allāh *ta'ālā* will convey other genuine seekers to Paradise through that person while he himself will be deprived of it. This is why I urge you to hold on firmly to the creed of our elders and to devote yourselves to academic and practical efforts. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire me first of all, and all of you as well. Āmīn.

Look around you today as well, and you will see that Allāh *ta'ālā* confers acceptance and popularity

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da'wat*, pp. 44, 47.

^٢ صحيح البخاري، كتاب الجهاد والسير، باب إن الله يؤيد الدين بالرجل الفاجر، ح (٣٠٦٢).

to the one who follows in the footsteps of our seniors. If a person is impressed by modernism and chooses a different path, he may acquire temporary popularity, but he will not enjoy acceptance. Acceptance is only conferred to the one who follows the path of the seniors and elders of the past. This is because it is really the path of the Sunnah.

A whispering which is experienced by students

Students sometimes experience this whispering: Instead of following the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, we are being asked to follow our seniors and elders of the past! There is a very simple answer to this. Are we not asked to make taqlīd of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*? What does this mean? It means that we have full confidence in Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* that whatever he says will be in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Following in the footsteps of our elders and seniors has the same meaning. That is, we have full confidence that whatever they say will be in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Following them will automatically make us from among those who are following the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

The practice of Hadrat Gangohī

A person came to Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* and asked: “Hadrat, what is the Sunnah way in such and such action?” This was an academic question wherein the person asked for the Sunnah method of carrying out a certain action. Hadrat Sahāranpūrī replied: “You spent time with Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and you must have certainly seen him carrying out this action.” The person replied in the affirmative by

saying: “Yes, I did see Hadrat carrying out this action.” Hadrat Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* said: “That is in fact the Sunnah way.”¹

Hadrat Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* was not just an ordinary Sufi. He was also an erudite research scholar. He had so much of conviction in every action of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* being in accordance with the Sunnah that he used his action as evidence for the Sunnah way in the sense that Hadrat Gangohī’s action will be exactly in line with the Sunnah.

Thus, when it is said that we must follow in the footsteps of our elders, it means that their lives were spent in following the Sunnah. And if we follow them, we will be following the Sunnah. If we divert from their path, we will be distancing ourselves from following the Sunnah. The understanding of the Qur’ān and Hadīth which Allāh *ta’ālā* bestowed on our elders in this era has been conferred to very few people.

May Allāh *ta’ālā* inspire me first of all, and all of you as well. May Allāh *ta’ālā* reward you because through your sincere request, I received the honour of taking part in a good deed.

بَارَكَ اللهُ فِيكُمْ، وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اِنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

¹ *Islāhī Taqrīre*, vol. 7, p. 207.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* translation of this book was completed on 17 Muharram 1439 A.H./08 October 2017. We pray to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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